

VZCZCXRO6966  
PP RUEHBI  
DE RUEHLM #1099/01 3380511  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
P 030511Z DEC 08  
FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9014  
INFO RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 1174  
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 8172  
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU 6390  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 4606  
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 2442  
RUEHNY/AMEMBASSY OSLO 4562  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 3668  
RUEHCG/AMCONSUL CHENNAI 8820  
RUEHBI/AMCONSUL MUMBAI 6205  
RUEHON/AMCONSUL TORONTO 0789  
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 3053  
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC  
RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC  
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 COLOMBO 001099

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR SCA/INS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/07/2018

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [PHUM](#) [MOPS](#) [CE](#)

SUBJECT: SRI LANKA: SECURITY DETERIORATES IN EASTERN PROVINCE

REF: A. COLOMBO 1070

[1](#)B. COLOMBO 1036

Classified By: Charge d' Affaires James R. Moore Reasons: 1.4(b,d).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: Over the past three weeks the security situation in the East has deteriorated as LTTE cadres and TMVP members loyal to Karuna have conducted a series of killings. In response, the government imposed a curfew on Batticaloa and the Chief Minister and Mayor of Batticaloa went on a one-day hunger strike. Police sources told RSO FSN that Karuna fighters have issued warnings to the Batticaloa MPs to not make any critical statements. While the spike in killings may have subsided the security situation in the East remains fragile.

Spike in Killings  
-----

[1](#)2. (C) Since the assassination of Chief Minister Pillaiyan's chief aide "Ragu" (ref B) on November 14, there has been a series of killings in the East. On November 16 a doctor at Batticaloa Hospital was murdered by suspected LTTE attackers. Following the murder, Sinhalese doctors in the East were removed. (According to the Sri Lankan NGO Foundation for Coexistence, by December 2 several of these doctors had returned to work.) Embassy contacts reported that as many as 38 civilians were killed from November 25-28 in Batticaloa District. Victims included a Hindu priest in Mamankam and a Norwegian Refugee Council staff member, who according to the organization was taken from his home on the evening of the 27th and shot in a decommissioned IDP site nearby. Multiple sources in the East report that many of the killings were conducted by unknown individuals on motorbikes that did not have license plates. Most observers in the East attribute the majority of the hits to Karuna loyalists within the TMVP.

Curfew Imposed  
-----

[1](#)3. (C) On November 29 the government imposed a curfew on Batticaloa and conducted widespread house-to-house searches. As a result of the sweeps, 123 individuals were taken into

custody. Of the 123, two have been detained and four are still being questioned. During an early November visit, before the uptick in violence, the Army's 234 Brigade Commander Upali Rajapakse estimated to PolOff that in his area of operations in Batticaloa up to 10 to 15 civilians are turned over to police for questioning on a daily basis with two or three normally detained for longer than 24 hours.

#### Chief Minister and Mayor Protest

-----

14. (U) In response to the killings, Eastern Provincial Council Chief Minister Pillaiyan and Batticaloa Mayor Sivageetha Prabhakaran announced on November 28 they were conducting a one-day hunger strike. Two days later TMVP General Secretary E. Kailesvararajah publicized the TMVP's temporary suspension of its participation in the All Parties Representative Committee, stating that the party had to ensure normalcy in the East before tackling "a political solution to the national question."

#### Karuna Threatening Fellow MPs

-----

15. (C) While LTTE infiltrators in the East are conducting some of the targeted assassinations, the vast majority appear to be the work of Karuna loyalists in the TMVP. Police sources told RSO FSN that Karuna loyalists have told Batticaloa TNA MP Ariyanethran that any statement he makes to the group's displeasure would be "costly" for him. The same

COLOMBO 00001099 002 OF 002

source claimed that similar threats had been passed to all of the MPs from Batticaloa. During a meeting at the Embassy, TNA MP Chandrakanthan Nehru reported that he is unable to return to Ampara, the district he represents in Parliament, out of fear for his life.

16. (C) COMMENT: Strong divisions remain within the TMVP. A range of embassy contacts believe that Karuna is receiving support from Basil and Gothabaya Rajapaksa and speculate that the Chief Minister has the President's backing. There is wide speculation in the East that Karuna will receive a ministerial portfolio, possibly the Ministry of Nation Building, early next year. The recent surge in killings seems to have subsided, however the security situation in the East remains fragile as LTTE infiltration and deep divisions within the TMVP could produce a spike in violence again at any moment. End Comment  
Moore